

Camp at Narrows. Giles Co. [County] Va.
Thursday. Novr. 12th '63

Dear Brother,

Your letter dated the 1st Novr. reached me while in Camp near Wytheville, some 5 or 6 days since. When I last wrote you our Regiment was at Abingdon. We left there about the 25th of October, and went to Wytheville, as a raid was anticipated on that place. Eight of our Companies were stationed on the Tazewell turnpike 7 miles from town at the foot of a very strong mountain pass. Two Cos. [companies] were stationed on the Princeton Pike some 8 miles distant from the others at another very strong pass. We passed some two weeks there very pleasantly. There had been no troops of any acct. [account] there since the war commenced, and the people showed us very great kindness. We got everything nice to eat, and whenever we would stop at any house for a meal we could not induce them to receive any pay. The day of our arrival there the citizens of the town gave our barefooted men some 1500 dollars worth of shoes. I got acquainted with several families and some very sweet and refined society, particularly the Crockett's who are the "bon ton" of the county. On Saturday morning last we recd. [received] a telegram telling us of Genl. [General] Echols defeat and retreat, and ordering us overland to this place. Sunday bright and early we started, and at night bivouacked 32 miles this side of Camp, in a snow storm. On Monday we reached Pearisburg, (Giles C.H. [Courthouse]) and Tuesday morning this place. This was the quickest march I have made since I have been in the army. Most of the way we followed an exceedingly rough mountain path, and in one place, had to climb a cliff some 30 or 40 feet high. The 36th marched all Saturday night and reached here Sunday at day break, a distance of 23 miles from Princeton. I will give you a short statement of Echols' little campaign. Genl. [General] Averil with some 3, or 4000 cavalry or mounted infantry came down from the North West, and met Wm. [William] L. Jackson 25 miles North of Lewisburg, at Group Mountain [sic, Droop Mountain]. Jackson hasn't got men enough or rather enough account to whip a good Regt. [regiment] of cavalry; consequently he sent very soon to Echols for reinforcements. Echols started to his assistance with the 22nd Va. Deniks Battalion, a Regt. [regiment] of cavalry and a battery or two. The rest of Echols' [sic, Echols] force viz. Edgars' Battl. [battalion] a Regt. [regiment] of cavalry, and two Cos. [companies] of Partizan Rangers [sic, Partisan Rangers] were stationed on different roads. They fought at Group Mountain [sic, Droop Mountain] from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. on Friday last the 6th, when Echols retreated hastily. Our cavalry is said to have behaved badly, breaking through the ranks of the infantry, and scattering them in every direction. During these operations 5 Regts. [regiments] advanced from Kanawha Valley up the Lewisburg turnpike and threatened, E.S. rear, which was probably the reason of his haste. However this may be he reached Salt Pond mountain some 13 miles East of here and 85 miles from Group Mountain [sic, Droop Mountain] on Monday, with from 3- to 500 men. Edgar's Battalion got in yesterday having made its way through the mountains, and bringing with it about 150 of the 22nd who had been cut off from their command to Echols has now about 800. His men are coming in daily, in 8 quads. Maj. [Major] Baily, 22nd Va. was mortally wounded whilst carrying the colors of his Regt. [regiment] and gallantly leading them on. The mortality amongst the officers is very great. Imboden, I understand met Averil [sic, Averell] at Covington and repulsed him. The 5 Regts. [regiments] who held Lewisburg evacuated it day before yesterday and retreated to Kanawha Valley. Averil [sic, Averell] has also gone to the North. Wise waiting for in probably to return with another little force so that he can gobble it ~~that~~ [sic, crossed off] up. The enemy burnt a large part of the town of Lewisburg, including the Court Ho. [House]. Echols intends going back again in a few days. I should not be at all surprised if the 60th should accompany him, though not if McCausland can prevent it. I am glad to see that you have hopes of Charleston yet. Do you think the war will last until Chester get old enough for a conscript [conscript]. [Continued on the side of page 4] I am your affectionate Brother, Eugene F. Cordell